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FOR SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, VIENNA

DEC 8 1955

493
DESP. NO.

November 28, 1955
DATE

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

Embdes 390, October 20, 1955

For Dept.	ACTION	DEPT.	CU 6 SCA 2, SC'S-2, IPT-1, SY-2, R-1 OSD-4, ARMY 4
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SUBJECT: American Citizens Detained by the Soviet Union

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Authority: UND 887404
By: JCH NARA Date: 11/20/87

Three Austrian returnees from the Soviet Union — Walter Stipek, Walter Brunner and Adalbert Skala — have come to the Embassy recently and proffered information concerning Americans whom they claim to have seen or met in various Soviet labor camps.

A. Walter Stipek (see Embdes #491, November 28, 1955) reported that in addition to Henry Malinauskas, he personally knew the following Americans:

- (1) Colonel Rudolf CZERNY. Stipek last saw Czerny in Vorkuta on May 24, 1955. He said that Czerny, unlike those prisoners awaiting repatriation who had been allowed to let their hair grow, still had his head shaven. He was in bad health and not quite up to par mentally. He told Stipek that he had been arrested in Western Germany in 1947 or 1948. When Embassy officers expressed surprise that Czerny was arrested in Western Germany, Stipek agreed that it was odd but said that was what Czerny had told him. Czerny said that he had been kept almost entirely in solitary confinement at Butyrskaya prison in Moscow before he was sent to Vorkuta. He was not allowed to write or receive letters and thinks that American authorities do not know he is detained by the Soviets. When Stipek left Vorkuta Czerny's address was Perysilka (a transit camp), Vorkuta P.O. Box 175/58. Stipek stated that at the time of his departure Vorkuta was no longer supposed to be a camp for foreigners and that it is possible that Czerny may have been transferred elsewhere.
- (2) FOLLINGTON. An American Communist who went to the USSR in 1932. He was first employed as a worker in a steel combine at Magnitogorsk. From 1944 to 1948, he worked as an English-language broadcaster for Radio Moscow. Stipek thinks that Follington is probably not the man's correct name, but one assumed for his radio job. Follington is married to a Russian and has a Russian family. He told Stipek that he went to the American Embassy in Moscow in 1948 and applied, unsuccessfully, for an American passport. He is now completely disillusioned with Communism and the Soviet Union and, despite his Russian family, only wants to get out and return to the United States. Stipek did not know the location of Follington's home in the United States.

MJMcClellan/bhm

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States or anything about his family. He described Follington as about 1.65 meters tall, stocky, with very short, sparse black hair now going very grey, and light grey-blue eyes. Stipek said that he was obviously a very well-educated man. When Stipek last saw him in May 1955, Follington was in Vorkuta, Mine No. 1.

B. Walter Brunner, Waehringerstrasse 113/7, Vienna XVIII, returned from the Soviet Union on November 16, 1955. He stated that he had been an agent of the 430th CIC and was arrested on February 4, 1953, by the Soviets at the Enns bridge. Brunner claims he knew the following Americans:

- (1) Michael DEMESCO, of 77 Park Lane, Springfield, New Jersey (his brother's address). In 1949 Demesco obtained a visa to the USSR in order to go there and try to get an exit visa for his wife, a Soviet citizen whom he married in Berlin after the war. He told Brunner that he had been warned by the State Department that it would be dangerous for him to go to the Soviet Union. He went, however, and was arrested in Moscow in 1950 and sentenced for espionage. Brunner met him in May 1955 in the camp at Patma.
- (2) Sidney Ray SPARKS. An American deserter whom Brunner met at Vorkuta in 1954. Sparks, a young man in his middle twenties whose home is in Florida, had been stationed in Berlin. At the time of his desertion he had a court-martial pending for assaulting a German cab-driver. In order to avoid the court-martial, Sparks ran away and reported to the Soviet authorities. The Soviets took him to Bautzen as a political refugee. While at Bautzen Sparks went back and forth to Berlin to visit a girl friend and other friends. The MVD authorities warned him not to continue. He kept it up, however, and was finally arrested by the MVD and sentenced to ten years for espionage. Sparks told Brunner that he was afraid the U.S. Army still wants to prosecute him.

C. Adalbert Skala, who was interrogated by the Austrian police earlier this year (Embdespatch #35, July 8, 1955), gave the following information. He stated that he was a former agent of CIC, that he had worked for CIC Frankfurt from 1945 to 1947 (his chief being a Mr. Harrison who lived in Wiesbaden). In 1947 he was deported to Austria and subsequently worked with CIC Vienna for a Major Ettinger and a Colonel Crocker. He said that his agent number was B-2. Skala impressed the interviewing officers as a rather unreliable young man with a shady background. He was extremely nervous (he said he had been in the hospital for several months after his return to Austria) and it was difficult to make him tell a straightforward story. When he left he had made an appointment (which he has never kept) to return to the Embassy with certain documents and photographs which, he alleged, pertained to Americans he had known in Soviet camps. He indicated at the time that he would like financial assistance from the Embassy, and it is felt that his failure to return was probably due to the fact that he was not promised any payment. It is also noted that the information he gave the Embassy concerning a First Lieutenant GEWI does not match the information he gave the Austrian police on a man he called Gewy ROBINSON (Embdespatch #35,

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July 8, 1955). Skala's story is included, however, as a matter of record.

- (1) Robert JOHNSON, an MP from Linz, allegedly identified as MP No. 309. According to Skala, he and Johnson were kidnapped by the Soviets in Urfahr on January 25, 1950. As far as could be ascertained Skala and Johnson were first taken to St. Valentin and then to an MGB prison in Baden. There Skala was held about six months. He was then flown to Moscow, kept about five weeks in Lubyanka and flown back to Baden. After his return to Baden, Skala was tried for espionage together with Johnson. Both were sentenced to death, but the sentence was later commuted to 25 years hard labor. About June 15, 1950, Skala and Johnson were sent by train to the Soviet Union. They travelled together as far as Lvov where they were separated, Johnson going to Karaganda. In 1951 while at Vorkuta, Skala heard that Johnson had been transferred from Karaganda to Sakhalin. In June 1954, Skala was brought from Taishet to Moscow where, according to him, his case was reexamined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Moscow he was told that Johnson had admitted that he and Skala had planned to blow up the Soviet Kommandatura in Urfahr. During the interrogation Skala was confronted with Johnson, who denied the Soviet accusations and said he was an MP and had never worked for CIC. Johnson was in very bad shape, minus nearly all his teeth and hardly recognizable. According to Skala, the Soviets, upon reviewing the case, decided to reduce both men's sentences, Johnson's from 25 to 15 years. Following this interrogation Skala was sent to Irkutsk, where he remained in solitary confinement in a prison known as the Alexandovsk Central. On May 30, 1955, he was taken to Irkutsk Prison No. 2 for about a week and then brought back to Moscow by train under escort of an MVD officer. He was taken to a dacha about 15 kilometers outside Moscow and there told that he had been amnestied but that an officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wished to interrogate him further. Skala was eventually brought to the Ministry of Interior in Moscow where he had to sign six forms stating that he would never discuss his case with the Austrian authorities or with the American Embassy in Vienna. About the 10th or 12th of June, 1955, Johnson turned up at the dacha. Johnson, who was in much better health, told Skala that his sentence had been cancelled but that he was to remain as an internee at the dacha and not to leave the grounds. When Skala left the dacha enroute to repatriation to Austria Johnson was still there. Skala claims that Johnson asked him not to report his case to the American Embassy in Vienna but to inform American authorities in Germany.

Johnson is described by Skala as 176 centimeters tall, stout, black-haired, about 38 years old. He told Skala that he was engaged to an American girl and comes from California. His father apparently owns some kind of factory.

- (2) Skala also claims that he met four American military prisoners from Korea at Taishet in 1952. He saw and spoke to them. One, he claims, was a First Lieutenant GEWI; he was a very intelligent man, about 138 centi-

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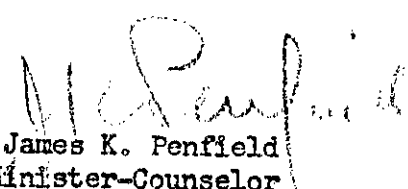
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meters tall, and had belonged to an armored car unit with UN troops in Korea. He had been captured while on patrol.

For the Department's information, Rudolf Winter von Schwab, previously reported by various Austrian returnees as an American citizen, and as such included in earlier Embassy despatches, has now been identified as an Austrian citizen who lives at Rudolfstrasse 46, Linz-Urfahr. He returned from imprisonment in the USSR on November 16.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:


James K. Penfield
Minister-Counselor

Copies to:
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